

MANAGING URINARY CHANGES



Radiation therapy to the pelvis can cause irritation to your bladder. This is called radiation cystitis, and it may cause problems with urination (peeing), including:

- **Dysuria** [di-shur-ee-ah]: a burning feeling when you urinate
- **Hematuria** [he-mah-tur-ee-ah]: a reddish color or a small amount of blood in your urine
- **Urinary retention**: difficulty emptying your bladder
- **Urinary urgency**: a sudden need to urinate
- **Urinary frequency**: urinating a small amount, frequently throughout the day
- **Stress incontinence**: leaking urine when you sneeze or cough



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TIPS TO MANAGE SYMPTOMS



Drink enough liquids during the day so that your urine is clear-to-yellow in color. Take small sips of liquid rather than drinking a lot at one time. Foods that are mostly liquid can also help. Good choices include: water, juice, Gatorade, soup, and Jell-O.



Avoid drinks that may irritate your bladder. This includes drinks that contain alcohol, caffeine, artificial sweeteners, or other stimulants. These include coffee, cocoa, tea, soda, energy drinks, beer, wine, or hard liquor.



Avoid eating foods that are acidic and contain MSG or artificial sweeteners, as these may irritate your bladder.



Some medications can improve urine flow and can help empty the bladder. Speak to your radiation oncologist if this concern arises.



Your radiation oncologist may check your urine for bacteria and prescribe an antibiotic medication if you have a urinary infection.



Kegel exercises can strengthen your pelvic floor muscles (the muscles that help control your urine flow) and help control incontinence. Ask your care team for the Kegel handout.

Changes in your urination will slowly begin to improve after your radiation treatment is complete. If you have any concerns or questions, be sure to speak with your doctor or nurse.



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